

DARK WATER



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DARKWATER

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Prologue

THE
SAPPHIRE
STAR ON
WHICH
WE DWELL



THE SOURCE
OF ITS
COLOR
IS THE
OCEAN.

WHICH
MAKES UP
ROUGHLY
70% OF THE
PLANET'S
SURFACE

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ITS
APPEARANCE
HAS CHANGED
DRAMATICALLY.

TOKYO BAY
IN JUST A
FEW SHORT
DECADES.



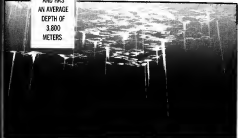
HAVE BEEN
USED TO TURN
OCEAN INTO
ARTIFICIAL SHORE

THE WASTE
PRODUCTS OF
MANKIND'S
OWN
INDUSTRIAL
CREATIONS

IT HAS BECOME
A PLACE NEITHER
LAND NOR SEA



THE WATER
SPANS
305 MILLION
SQUARE
KILOMETERS.



AND HAS
AN AVERAGE
DEPTH OF
3,800
METERS



AND
PERHAPS
TERRIFIES
US.

IT
FASCINATES

IT IS THE
SOURCE FROM
WHICH WE
LIFE FORMS
SPRANG.

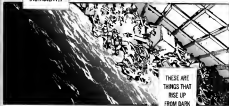
Anxiety that pools
at the bottom of
one's heart will
stagnate in quietude.

Dark Water



THE
INHERENT
UNBALANCE
OF SUCH
A PLACE..

THE
NARRATIVES
BORN FROM
SUCH
INSTABILITY..



THESE ARE
THINGS THAT
RISE UP
FROM DARK
WATERS...



TO RESONATE
WITH THE
DARKNESS
WITHIN
OURSELVES.

PROLOGUE / END



HEY,
IT'S BILLY.
WHAT
CAN YOU
DO?

HOW COULD
ANYONE BE
SELECTED BY
SOMETHING
LIKE THIS?

THE OD-SO ATTACK

By Kaito Ho



ONCE, THINKING
NOTHING OF IT,
I'D FLIPPED
THROUGH ONE
OF HIS BOOKS...

THE SCENE
WAS SO
GRAPHIC.
I THOUGHT
I WAS
GOING
TO LOSE
MY MIND.

SIR.



WHAT
ARE YOU
TALKING
ABOUT?

MR.
MATSU-
BARA.

I'M
SORRY.

BUT
PROOFING
THIS GALLEY
COPY IS
WORK.

I'M
COUNTING
ON YOU
TO DO A
GOOD JOB
ON IT.

All New Kaito Ho Publications
**THE
BLOOD-SOAKED
ATTACKER**

By Kaito Ho

AND BE
OVERCOME
WITH THE
FEELING
THAT
WE COULD
NEVER BE
TOGETHER.

I
WONDER
IF...

SUCH
SAY, ONE
DESIRE
WOULD
EVER BE
FRACTURED
TOWARDS
US...

YUKA GAVE
ME SOME
FIREWORKS!

MONDAY!

WHO'D
EVEN PAY
FOR IT,
PROBABLY
LEAD
HAPPY
LIVES.

I THINK
PEOPLE
WHO
WOULD
WANT
TO READ
THIS BOOK...

THAT
THEY
COULD
READ THIS
AND THINK
NOTHING
OF IT.

PEOPLE
LIKE MY
EX-HUSBAND,
THE
AUTHOR'S
WORK...

WAS
ON HIS
BOOKSHELVES
AS WELL.

IT'S
BECAUSE
THEY
DON'T
FEEL FEAR,
OR
ANXIETY...





I WON'T
BUT
SHE WAS
APOLOGIZING
FOR.



I WON'T
TURN OUT
LIKE HER.





NO BURNING, ENJOY IT!



WHOEVER DID THIS PROBABLY HAS SOME PUT-UP FRUSTRATION TOWARDS SOCIETY.



HOW ABOUT THE ROOF?



THE RESULT:
APARTMENTS
LIKE THIS
FAILED
TO DRIVE
UP LAND
PRICES.

AND BOTH
MONEY
RENTING
TRIAL, A LOT
OF THEM
GET USED
AS ADDITIONAL
OFFICES.



THOSE
PLANS
WERE
HALTED
AFTER THE
BUBBLE
BURST.



THANKS
TO THAT,
A SINGLE
MOTHER
LIKE ME CAN
AFFORD TO
LIVE HERE,
IN THE CITY.



WELL,
AT NIGHT,
ALL TRACES
OF HUMANITY
DISAPPEAR...



THAT MUCH
IS CERTAIN.

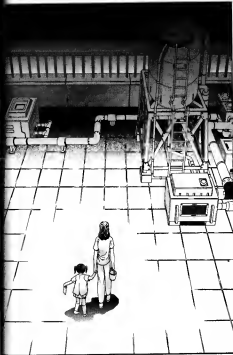


SOMEONE
WITH
THAT
KIND OF
RAGGET
USED THE
ELEVATOR.



CONSTRUCTION
IN THIS AREA WAS
SUPPOSED TO
BEGIN YEARS AGO
AND THEY WERE EVEN
GOING TO
BUILD SOME
SUPER HIGH-RISE
APARTMENTS.









WE COULD
ALWAYS
GIVE IT TO
BUNDO.

IF WE
CAN'T FIND
WHO IT
BELONGS
TO...

NO,
IF NO ONE
CLAIMS
IT...

THROW
IT
AWAY.

TWO
YEARS?T
BUT, DIDN'T
THEY MOVE
LAST
YEAR?

BUT
THAT WAS
TWO YEARS
AGO.

THEY HAD
A GIRL,
AROUND
FIVE OR
SIX...

BUT
THERE
WAS AN
ACCIDENT.
AND...

THEY
MOVED
IN THE
SUMMER
OF LAST
YEAR.

I'LL PUT THE
PURSE ON THE
FRONT COUNTER,
AND WE'LL SEE
IF WE CAN FIND
THE OWNER.

TELL
YOU
WHAT.

YES,
AS
I TOLD
YOU.



AN
ACCIDENT...



WHAT KIND OF
ACCIDENT
WERE THE
PEOPLE ON THE
SECOND FLOOR
INVOLVED IN?





WHY DID
YOU...?



WHY,
HOMMY?



IT
HURTS...



IT HURTS...
HOMMY?



I CAN SEE
THE TINY
BUBBLES
AS THEY
FLOAT,
SUSPENDED.
AND...

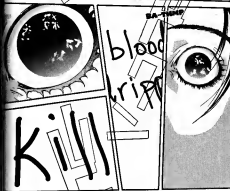
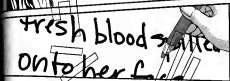
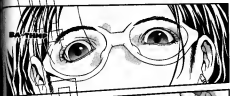
WERE THERE
STUCK TO
THE BOTTOM
OF THE
GLASS, OR
WERE THEY
ALREADY
IN THE
WATER?





THIS
WATER...







NOBODY?



I'LL BE A
GOOD GUY.
PLEASE.



IT'S
DARK.
GOLF.



LET ME
OUT.



WHO
SEALED
ME IN
HERE?



WHO?









I THOUGHT
SOMETHING
WAS A BIT
SUSPICIOUS
ABOUT HER.

JUST
BETWEEN
YOU AND
ME...



HUH?



BUT THEN
SHE UP
AND MOVED
SOMEWHERE



THE
BURNERS
ON HER
ARM.



BUT I...

IT'D
GIVE
THEM.



HER
DAUGHTER...
SOMEONE
COULD
HELP.

SHE WAS
SUCH
A CUTE
YOUNG
GIRL...



YOU
HEAR...

SHE
WAS
KIDNAP-
PED?



SHE WAS
PLAYING
AROUND THE
NEIGHBORHOOD
ONE DAY WHEN
SHE JUST
DISAPPEARED.

THEY HAD
A GIRL JUST
ABOUT THE
SAME AGE
AS KURO
IS NOW.



EVEN THE POLICE
CHANGED THEIR
INVESTIGATION.
I'VE TO TRY AND
GET TIPS FROM THE
GENERAL PUBLIC.

I DON'T THINK
ANYONE WAS
AFTER A
RANSOM.



WELL,
THEY NEVER
FOUND HER.
THE MOTHER
STAYED HERE
A WHILE
LONGER...



SO
HOW
DID IT
ALL...?



MAYBE
MICCHAN
IS STILL
HERE.
Y'KNOW?

SOMETHING
I THINK THAT
MAYBE...

TOOK
THE



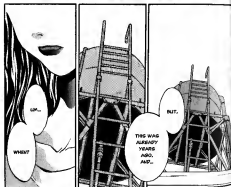
BRUTALLY.

HAPPY.
IT LOOKED
LIKE THE MOM
HAD BEEN
DISCIPLINING
HER.



BUT SHE'D
JUST SAY
THAT SHE'D
FALLEN

TO ASK HER
ABOUT IT.
CASUALLY...



WHEN?

UP...

BUT.

THIS WAS
ALREADY
YEARS
AGO, AND...



IT LOOKED LIKE
THE STRESS
OF BEING A
SINGLE MOTHER
WAS JUST
GETTING TO BE
TOO MUCH
FOR...



WHEN
I HEARD THAT
MICCHAN WAS
MISSING.



OH... I...

I'M
SORRY.

I THOUGHT,
I BET IT
WAS THE
MOM THAT
KILLED HER.



THAT
SAME
DAY,

THEY
WERE
CLEANING
OUT THE
WATER
TANK.



HUIT
OH.

UH...
WHAT'S
TEST



IT SHOULD
BE IN MY
LEADER
HERE...

OH,
GIVE ME A
SECOND.



YEAH,
GIVE ME
50.



I'M
SORRY!



ANYWAY.



AS YOU'VE
NO DOUBT
GOD, THE
MANAGEMENT
ASSOCIATION'S
BELL...



HAS
IT BEEN
CLEANED
SINCE
THAT?

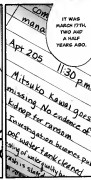
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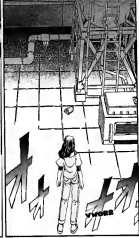
cleaned

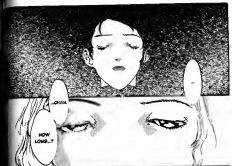


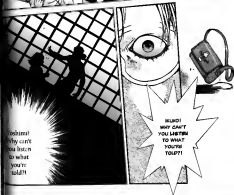
water tank

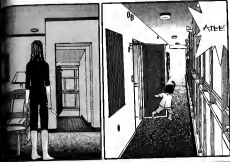
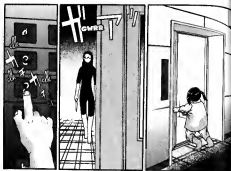


IT WAS
MARCH 17TH,
TWO AND
A HALF
YEARS AGO.

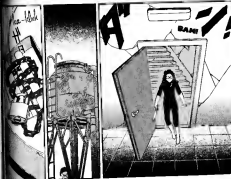












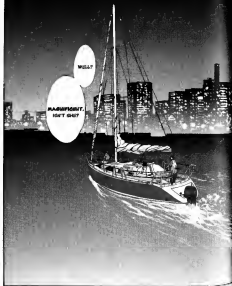






DARK WATER / END

Island Cruise





WHAT I
WANT

HIT A
YACHT...



EVERYTHING
YOU'VE
DREAMED
OF!

EVERYTHING
YOU'VE
WANTED.



THANK
YOU.

MR.
SHIYOSH



AT THIS
RATE,

IT'S
PROBABLY
AMOUNT TO
NOTHING MORE
THAN YOUR
AVERAGE
OFFICE
WORKER.



IT'S
SOMETHING
THAT NO
AMOUNT
OF MONEY
COULD BUY.

OR
SOME
FINELY
FOURGE
GAIL...



YEAR...



NO, THIS...
THIS IS TOO
MUCH FOR
SOMEONE
LIKE ME.



Y'KNOW,
YOU COULD
GET ONE
OF THESE.
TOO.



MR.
BRODYOH,
PLEASE.

LET'S
WORK
TOGETHER
AND BRAB
THE HAPPINESS
WE DESERVE
WITH BOTH
HANDS!

WE'RE
ABOUT TO
MOVE UP
AND THIS
BANK CAN
SERVE.



HAPPY,
YOU SAY
THAT YOU
'RE STILL
YOUNG
AND
HAVE!



MRS.
USHIYAMA



THERE
ARE OTHER
KINDS OF
HAPPINESS...
ONES THAT
MONEY CAN'T
BUY.



LOOK,
I'M TELLING
YOU, THIS
BUSINESS
I'M OFFERING
YOU...

IS
COMPLETELY
LEGIT.



IT'S NOT
THAT
I DON'T
CARE
ABOUT
MONEY...

IT'S
JUST.

I DON'T
WANT TO
STEP ON
OTHER
PEOPLE'S
HEADS TO
GET IT.



HAPPY
MOMENT.
DON'T IT?

YOU'VE BEEN
SELLING
OUT OF
STORE.

SO THE
MONEY SAVED
ON INFLUENCING
COSTS GETS
RETURNED
BACK
TO THE
BUYER.

YOU'RE
SURROUNDED
BY PEOPLE
WITH THE
SAME GOALS.
THE SAME
IDEALS...

THAT
KID ON
THAT
ISG

IS
EXACTLY
WHAT
YOU'D FIND
IN SOME
GUILTY!

AND IT
BECOMES
IMPOSSIBLE
FOR YOU TO
BREAK FREE!

THIS HAS
TO DO WITH
HAPPINESS,
TOO!

ABOUT
MATERIAL
GAIN HERE!

WE'RE
NOT JUST
TAKEN!



SHOW ME
OUT THERE
IN THE
WORLD
MORE
ABSOLUTE

THAT
MONEY!



YOUR
PROBLEM
IS YOU
JUST
CAN'T
SEE THE
TRUTH!

EVEN THE
"KINDS OF
HAPPINESS
MONEY CAN'T
BUY" STILL
REQUIRE
MONEY!

THERE'S NO
WAY YOU CAN
RAISE A LOT
WITH THE SALARY
YOU'RE PULLY
IN DEBT!





NO.
AND IT
ISN'T OUT
OF BAG,
EITHER.

IT LOOKS LIKE
SOMETHING'S
STUCK IN THE
PROPELLER.

IS IT...
WORKING?



YOU JUST
CAN'T SEE
THE WORLD
FOR WHAT
IT IS.
CAN YOU?



WHAT IS
THAT?



RRR



WHY
AREN'T WE
MOVING?



GOOD,
NOW
LET'S GET
OUT OF
HERE.



WE CAN'T
HAVE RUN
AGROUND
OF ANYTHING...

NO, WE
AREN'T
MOVING
FORWARD
OR
BACKWARD!



KAZU-
KIRO.



THERE'S
A
NAME...



A CHILD'S
SHOE...
IN THE
PROPELLER.



OH...

OH!



THROW
IT BACK,
QUICK!

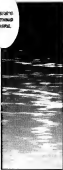
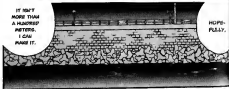
BEYOND!

THAT...
THAT'S JUST
HORRIBLE!











IT'S
ALRIGHT!
I'M GOING
TO GO CALL
FOR HELP!



KA-SPLASH



ALL
AND
YOUR
AHEAD?

NOT ME!

YOU ARE
THE ONE
WHO CAN'T
SEE THINGS
FOR WHAT
THEY ARE.



THERE
IS NO
ONE!



THAT'S
SO
PROFOUNDLY
BY SOME
ONE'S
THAT YOU'VE
STARTED TO
UNDERSTAND!



YOU'RE
SEEING
THINGS
THAT
COULDN'T
POSSIBLY
BE THERE.



HAVE
BEEN
SO
BLIND
BY ONE'S...

THAT
YOU'VE
LOST ALL
REALITY!



THEY
CAN'T BE
ANYTHING
DOWN THERE.



SOMETHING
LIKE THAT...
COULDN'T
EVEN EXIST!





I DIDN'T
SEE THE
CORPSE
OF THAT
CHILD.

I DIDN'T
WANT TO
SEE IT... NO.
MORE LIKE,
I TRIED
NOT TO
SEE IT.





AND I'VE
ALREADY
RESOLVED
NOT TO
THINK WHAT
IT MAY
HAVE
BECOME.

THAT MOMENT
WHEN I FELT
SOMETHING
TOUGH
MY FOOT...

ISLAND CRUISE / END

Adrift

There's this
ship that sails
along, looking
kind of
SUSPICIOUS.
Someone
boards it to
take a look...



Say, have
you heard
the one
about the
ghost ship?



and everything
says that up until
a couple minutes ago,
the crew had been
having a good
old time...



and then,
POOF!
They'd just
vanished
like smoke.



Adrift



What if
this was the
work of some
strange
creature ...

that had risen
from the
depths of the
ocean floor?





IT'D BE A
WASTE TO
JUST GET
RID OF IT!

THIS COULD
BE SOME
WEIRD NEW
TYPE OF
CREATURE!



I MEAN
HOW'D IT
EVEN GET
IN THERE?



BUT,
DON'T
YOU THINK
IT'S KINDA
WEIRD?





ADRIFT / END

NO DOUBT
YOU'VE HEARD
OF THIS PLACE.
THE GROUND-
WATER THAT
SEEPS FROM
THIS MOUNTAIN-
OUS KNOX...

Forest Beneath the Waves

FLows OUT
TO MERGE
WITH A BRANCH
OF THE
TAMA RIVER
AND FLOWS
INTO TOKYO
BAY.



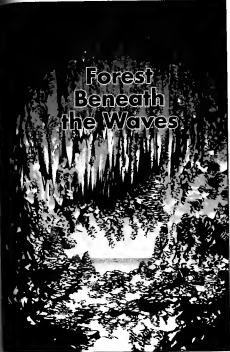
I'LL NEVER
MAKE IT
BACK.
NEVER
AGAIN
STAND
IN THAT
PAZZLING
LIGHT...

I CAN FEEL
DEATH
COMING
FOR ME,
SLOWLY
BUT
SURELY...

AND ALL
THE WHILE,
I CURSE
THE
FOOLISH-
NESS
OF MY
ACTIONS.

I'M BEREFT
BY ANGER,
FOLLOWED
BY
SADNESS
AND
DESPAIR.

Forest Beneath the Waves





WHEN
I ACTUALLY
FOUNDED
THAT
ENTRANCE.

I WAS
STRUCK
BY NOW
THERE WAS
NO SIGN
AT ALL
OF HUMAN
PASSAGE.



IT WAS AS IF
IT LAUGHED
AT ALL OF MY
DAY-TO-DAY
FRUSTRATIONS...

AN
UNTOUCHED
GAVE
ENTRANCE.



AND
CALLED
TO ME.



I HAD PRETTY
MUCH LOST
ANY SENSE OF
ADVENTURE.
I MEAN,
NOW I WAS
A GROWN
MAN IN MY
THIRTIES...

AND ABOUT
TO HAVE
NO CHILDREN.
SO TO HALF
WASH UP ON
HAVING ANY
KIND OF GREAT
ADVENTURE.



THE CLOTHING
I WORE WERE
RATHER
LIGHT
FOR GAVE
EXPLORATION.



THE PURPOSE
OF MY NICE
HIDE IN THE
MOUNTAINS
WAS TO TRY
AND FIND A
NATURAL
CAVERN.



IT WAS TWO
YEARS AGO.
MY SON TAKENRO
WAS ALREADY
BORN, AND
MY WIFE WAS
PREGNANT WITH
OUR SECOND CHILD.



IT WAS
IN MY JOB.
THE SAME
ONE I'D BEEN
DOING FOR
YEARS...

THAT I'D
BOUGHT
OUT
STABIL-
ITY



WHILE IT
WAS IN THE
HAPPINESS
OF MY
FAMILY THAT
I'D BOUGHT
PEACE OF MIND.



RIDING ON MY
MOTORCYCLE,
I'D FIND MYSELF
LETTING UP
ON THE AXLE
WITHOUT EVEN
REALIZING IT.



BUT
NOW...

TEEN TWENTY
YEARS AGO
I WOULDN'T
HAVE CARED
IF I'D GONE
OUT LIKE
THIS.



NOW
I WAS
SCARED
OF
DEATH.





BEHOLD
BRAVE...

WONT THE
SAFE... AS
JUST BEHOLD
BEHOLDERS.

ALL I HAD
TO MY
WIFE WAS,
THY GONG
FOR A MINE
IN THE
MOUNTAINS."

I CAN'T
EXIST
THAT ANY
HELP WILL
COME
IF THERE
IS A WAY
OUT OF
HERE.
IT'D BE."

IT'S BEEN
FOUR DAYS
NOW SINCE
I'VE BEEN
TRAPPED
HERE,
WITH NO
WAY OUT.



BECAUSE
WHERE
I'VE COME,
THERE IS
NO GONG
BACK.



I
SHOULDN'T
HAVE
LISTENED
TO THAT
PROVOCATION.

BUT
THE GONG
ENTRANCE
AND CALLED
OUT TO ME.
AS IF TO
SAY...

"ARE YOU
REALLY
FINE WITH
ALL THAT?
WE, FURNISHED
SUBWAYMAN?"

THERE
HASN'T
MUCH
TIME
LEFT.



I'M PRETTY
GOOD AT
SIN SINING,
BUT IF I
LOSE MUCH
MORE
STRENGTH,
I WON'T BE
ABLE TO PULL
THIS OFF.



FEAR.
A FEAR
BEYOND
IMAGINATION



DO I SIT
HERE AND
WAIT TO BE
CLAIMED BY A
RELATIVELY
PAINLESS
DEATH?

OR DO I
FACE MY
FEARS
AND LOOK
FOR A
WAY OUT?

AND
WHETHER
I CAN HOLD
MY BREATH
LONG
ENOUGH
TO REACH
IT.

I WON'T
KNOW
UNLESS
I TRY...

BUT ONCE
I'M CAUGHT
IN THOSE
CURRENTS,
EVEN IF I THOUGHT
TAKE A TURN
AROUND THE BEND
THINK I'LL BE GOING BACK

THIS
UNDER-
GROUND
RIVER.



THE
CURRENTS
MOVE
RAPIDLY
FROM
RIGHT TO
LEFT.

WHEN REACHING
THESE CURRENTS
IS A RISK
BECAUSE
THEY
SWEEP
YOU A FOOT
OR MORE
DOWN.



ON THE
SURFACE
IT JUST
LOOKS LIKE
A PEACEFUL
LITTLE LAKE,
BUT I'VE
NOTICED THAT
IT'S ACTUALLY
A RIVER.



THE PROBLEM
IS WHETHER
THAT HOLE
WILL BE BIG
ENOUGH FOR
ME TO PASS
THROUGH OR
NOT...



SHOULD
THE
OUTCOME
BE FOR
THE
WORST...



IT'D LIKE
TO TEACH
HIM AT
LEAST
THIS ONE
THING.



TAKING

TAKE
THESE
WORDS
TO
HEART.



I THINK OF
MY SON,
TAKING
OF WHAT
I COULD TEACH
HIM WHEN HE
WAS OLDER...



THE CHILD
LEARNED FROM
HIS PARENT,
HAD SOMETHING
TO THAT
KNOWLEDGE,
AND PASSED
IT ON TO HIS
OWN CHILD.

AS IT
STAYS...



THAT,
I THINK,
IS THE
WHOLE
POINT OF
LIVING.



I HAVEN'T
YET
TAUGHT
HIM A
SMILE
THING.





AND
NEXT YEAR,
I'LL BE A
FATHER.



Dear Takahiko,
Even if you
know there's
no way out...

There are
times when
you start to
keep going...



BEFORE
THAT HAPPENS,
I WANTED TO
ONCE AGAIN
TAKE MY
FATHER'S
WORDS
TO HEART.



IF THOUGHT
ABOUT
COMING HERE,
JUST ALWAYS
THOUGHT
I HAD PLENTY
OF TIME TO
DO SO.



WE RECEIVED
THE LETTER FROM
KLENNING MY FATHER—
A YEAR AFTER HE'D
BEEN CONFIRMED
DEAD. THE LETTER
WAS SEALED UP IN
A FIRM CASE.



BECAUSE
I'M GOING
TO BE
MARRIED.



SO
WHY
AM I
HERE
NOW?



G

and look
for the
exit that
should be

Look after
your mother,
and the child
she'll soon
be leaving

come,
Dad

BUT THE
LAND WAS
ELEVATED,
BECOMING
SHORE...

LONG AGO,
THIS AREA
WAS AT THE
BOTTOM OF
THE OCEAN.

LIMESTONE
THE REMAINS
LEFT ON
TOP OF THE
JOURNALS OF
ORGANISMS
THAT ONCE
FLOATED
IN THE SEA.

AND
PASS
IT ON
TO HIS
SON.

HE TRIED
TO INFUSE
THAT
STRENGTH
OF WILL
INTO HIS
LETTER...

RUN
UP TO
THE BUT,
MY FATHER
WOULDN'T
WALK UP
ON LIME.

BECOMING
FOREST,
AND AFTER
BEING
FURTHER
COVERED
BY WATER.

BECOMING
THIS
GRANT,
EMPTY
EXPANSE.

THE BRISTLING
ROWS OF
STALACTITES
AND
STALAGMITES
MAKE IT LOOK
JUST LIKE
A FOREST.

JUST AHEAD,
THIS CURRENT
WILL RUN
FROM THE
RIVER AND
EMPTY INTO
THE OCEAN.

THAT
LETTER
HAS BEEN
A SOURCE
OF COURAGE
FOR ME
I DON'T
KNOW HOW
MANY TIMES.



A FOREST
BENEATH
THE WAVES.
THIS IS THE
LAST THING
THAT MY
FATHER
SAW.

A SCENE
THAT I'VE
BURIED
INTO MY
MEMORY
FOREVER.

FOREST BENEATH THE WAVES / END

intense stimuli, or maybe it's because I personally have grown into a rather boring adult...

As I began work on this adaptation of *Dark Water*, I read the original work to once again reflect on this thing called "fear." In doing so, I was able to glimpse the essence of *The Exorcist*, which for me had seemed to be frightening. As children, we're only able to use terror as it exists on the surface—we're unable to know that which is truly frightening. True terror is... how to put this? It's something that lies hidden in the deepest recesses of our hearts. It's a seeing what cannot be seen. Hearing what cannot be heard. Accepting what cannot be accepted. Honestly, I don't know if such a thing truly exists...

That being said, to me, the *mechanism* that allows us to see those things, hear those things, accept those things is frightening in and of itself.

As the years progress, perhaps the very essence of what makes "terror" is changing. I think so.

Michael



Afterword

About a year ago, *The Exorcist* was re-released in a director's cut with previously unseen footage. So I headed out to the movie theater, waiting to see something scary.

I was in elementary school when I'd first seen it on TV, and the face of the young girl who'd been possessed by the devil had filled me with such terror that I've been in a near-traumatic state ever since. I'm still as good as the face of that little girl that had those... those hands.

The film had been shown on TV a couple times since then, but this was going to be my first time to see it on the big screen, so my heart was really beating in my chest. What a nerve, I want to go see it around noon on a weekday, so there was only one other

person in the theater. I thought that I might run out of the theater when it came to some of the more frightening scenes, but that's not something an adult who'd paid to see the film would do. Thus, I took solace in that one other person who was in the theater and steadied myself for the film I was about to see...

but it wasn't in the least bit frightening. Even that girl's face, the one that had been so terrifying... nothing. Not a blip. Maybe it's because the age in which we live is one of such



sense of courage, a sense of energy. That's why horror doesn't really agree with me. For example, even in *Dark Water*, [the theme of] the last story was, "Overcome your difficulties. If you can't, then leave behind a message." My work definitely isn't just "horror." What I really enjoy writing are stories set on the coast, of men challenging and overcoming. Survival tales of people falling into these situations of extreme difficulty, but still managing to prevail. Those are where I'm most in my element. As for the actual location... well, it's mainly the ocean, but it can also be a mountain. Like in *Dark Water*, where you have a kind of underground cave inside a cave. Living inside that kind of enclosed environment is pretty frightening! Thus, I'd like for readers to read *Dark Water* as a whole, thinking of it as one of these stories.

6) What aspects of *Dark Water* were most challenging for you?

In writing a collection of short stories where the central theme is "water," it was difficult to come up with variations on that same theme for each of the stories.

7) Do you usually read manga? If so, what kind of manga? And could you please tell us which particular manga you like?

Aside from *Shogun Genesis* by Yu Koyama, I don't read manga.

8) Was it always your intent to become a novelist?

Yes.

9) How did you become a novelist? Also, please tell us about the difficulties you encountered in the process of becoming a novelist.

I became a novelist simply by writing novels [laughs]. The fact that there is no set method to becoming a novelist is exactly what makes it such hard work.

10) Which author(s) influenced you the most? Which novels did you like most when you were a child?

In terms of how I write, I'm currently most influenced by [Jean Paul] Sartre. When I was a child, I really liked the works of Osamu Tezuka and Jules Verne.

INTERVIEW WITH MR. KOJI SUZUKI

1) How long did it take to come up with the framework of the book?

I wrote it about two or three years after my debut. At that time, I hadn't done much short story writing, so it was something that I really put a lot of effort into. I've actually been working on the rooftop of a building with my own children, and the feelings impressed upon me by that scene led to the novel-like sense of images springing up in my mind. By that time, I'd [for the most part] come up with the story.

2) How involved were you with the live-action version of *Dark Water*?

I read the script, and offered up some pieces of advice to director [Naoki] Nakato.

3) One of the settings in the manga is a second apartment building. What made you choose such a second living environment as an apartment for a setting?

My original rule in writing a "scary" story is that it should not become removed from the normal, the everyday. I use story settings that are familiar, so that the reader can seamlessly enter [the story].

4) You're renowned as an expert on child-rearing, but was any additional research required on your part into domestic violence, or the phenomenon of the single mother/single father household?

I didn't have to do any special research. And I don't think of it as a bad thing if we see more single father households.

5) While you're most commonly known as an author of horror works such as *Ring* and *Dark Water*, we understand that you're actually not that big a fan of horror. What is it about the genre that you don't like? Also, what sort of writing do you most enjoy?

Rather than try to scare people, or fill them with a dread of the unknown, it's more in my character to report to them a



Dark Water

10 01

Dark Water

The full Japanese title is *Hologaraku* Mitsu no Soko Kara, which more literally translates to "From the bottom of the murky waters."

10 02

Artificial shore

This denotes an area that was originally sea but has been transformed into man-made land (the raw materials usually being post-consumer waste products). Tokyo Bay is one example of this, as is Kobe's Port Island.

10 03

Nisus Publishing

A single character stroke Noma from Sonoma Publishing, a Tokyo-based company that (while it does publish other works) specializes in hard and/or "fringe" magazines.

(2) Gallery copy

A pre-release copy of a book (or comic book) distributed for review purposes. As we'll see, Yoshikuni will copyright galleries as well as original manuscripts.

(5) Kaito Ito

Plugging this name Japanese style goes as Ito Kaito, an obvious pseudonym that combines the characters for *hakai* ("destroy") and *ito* (the name reading of *iteto*, meaning "person").

10 04

Characters in eyes

In panel three, we see the character for "death" reflected in Yoshikuni's eye, while panel five has the characters for "kill" and "person" (which together, would make "murderer") reflected backwards—an homage, perhaps, to *Rings*, where the cursed videotape showed the character souls appear backwards in an alien-looking eye.

10 05

Yama River

This is an actual river that flows from Mount Kasutori and (as mentioned in the text) merges with Tokyo Bay.

7) How did you become a manga artist? Also, please tell us about the difficulties you encountered in the process.

I submitted some of my work to a publishing company. The whole process went rather smoothly—at least after becoming a manga artist that the hard work began.

8) Which manga artist influenced you the most? Which manga did you most like when you were a child?

[Manga artists:] Go Nagai, Shōtaro Ishinomori. [Works:] *Devilman* and *Nice Nigori Kikaku*.

9) Were you influenced by media other than manga, such as movies, anime, TV, or music?

TV anime. <NOTE: Takatsu is a term generally ascribed with "special effects," and is used to refer to shows such as *Ultraman* that feature a variety of costumed heroes and monsters.>

10) Please tell us which recent manga title you especially like.

I haven't really been reading manga recently.

11) How do you feel about the *Dark Water* manga being published in the United States?

I'm extremely happy I think it's so lucky.

12) What are your thoughts regarding the popularity of Japanese horror in Europe and in the U.S.?

The success of four novels unchanged, regardless of race or religious view.

13) In dining, we would appreciate any message to your fans in the United States.

It will make me happy if [they] will enjoy the manga in a different way from the film and the original novel.

~~~~~

Special thanks to **MEIMU** for taking time to respond, despite his busy schedule.

## INTERVIEW WITH **MEIMU**

1) How long did it take to come up with the basic framework of the manga?

One month.

2) What aspects were challenging—or have did you take extra care—in illustrating [Tak Sasaki's] work?

Depicting the psychology of the female protagonists. The scenery. The expression of the characters' faces. Things like that.

3) Please tell us how you became the illustrator for this project, and your feelings when you were approached.

Prior to *Dark Water*, I was lucky enough to have illustrated some of Mr. Sasaki's other works [*Ring 2*, *Ring 6*, *Birthday*]. So I was simply overjoyed when I was offered to work on *Dark Water* as well.

4) It seems that the sense of horror your illustrations so skillfully convey are via depictions of the fragility of the human psyche, rather than relying as more obvious expressions such as zombies, ghosts, goblins and the like. What are the more challenging aspects of expressing yourself through illustration?

Because [we're] depicting horror that has a realistic appearance [and feel], I worked hard to illustrate the scenery, and so forth, to project that sense of reality.

5) Did you see the theatrical adaptation of *Dark Water*? What were your impressions of it, and how does it differ from the manga?

Yes, I saw the Japanese version. I liked the way they utilized water in the film was most ingenious.

6) Was it always your intent to become a manga artist?

I wrote that I wanted to become a manga artist back in my production essay for elementary school.

horror and sophistication. I think it's exciting how to construct a sense of livability that most things out the heart of the author. And [*Edge City*] is a work that treats this point most importantly.

It's a novel, the story of a certain [phenomenon] that begins in America and then goes on to our weekends, where people are disappearing from certain weekend spaces. I wanted to express fear through the void and detailed descriptions of those spaces, now that the people have disappeared.

14) In dining, do you have any message for your fans in America?

I think my works appeal more to American readers than to Japanese readers, so I'd like for [my American readers] to take and understand my works for what they are.

Many thanks to Mr. Sasaki for taking time to respond, despite his busy schedule.

11) We understand that you are a fan of both French and American literature. Were you influenced by any of these works? If so, in what way were you influenced? Also, what specific authors, works or genres have you been influenced by?

It's impossible for me to determine how I've been influenced, but through picking up and reading American and European literature at random, they've gradually become a part of me, my back and my mind. Some specific authors are [Albert] Camus and [J. Scott] Fitzgerald, and so on. I found [J.D.] Salinger to be absolutely, while I'm simply in awe of how Fitzgerald lived his life.

12) Aside from novels, have you been influenced by any other media, such as movies, anime, TV, or music?

Music has been the biggest influence on me. I do piano improvisation myself. I think that both music and novels conform to the same set pattern, and so the way in which they're written is also extremely similar.

13) How do you feel about works of yours, such as *Ring* and *Dark Water*, being remade in America?

Of course I welcome it with open arms, and am extremely happy. The new Japanese that I meet are very sceptical when I tell them that I'm the author of *Ring*. I really like seeing that reaction [laughs].

14) How do you feel about Japanese horror becoming so highly regarded in Europe and America?

I'm not really concerned with how horror as a whole is received. It's my wish that people and long my work together with other, general works of horror—rather, that they regard my works as completely different from those [horror] authors.

15) Your fans in America are eagerly awaiting your next project. Could you tell us a little bit about what's coming next?

If we're talking about something in the horror vein, that would be *Edge City* [however, it wasn't my intention to write something that was just plain "horror." Even horror requires things like